



PRESS RELEASE

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FORMER COTTONWOOD MAN SENTENCED FOR CROSS-BURNING

PHOENIX, ARIZONA -- The United States Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona today announced the sentencing of a Cottonwood man regarding civil rights violations. Thaddeus Ray Carroll was sentenced to eighteen months in prison by Judge Earl H. Carroll of the U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona for violating the federal Fair Housing Act. Under the criminal portion of the Fair Housing Act, it is a crime to willfully intimidate and interfere with, or attempt to intimidate or interfere with, the right of a person to occupy a dwelling because of the person's race or color.

"Our hope is that this case will send a strong message to those who are motivated by hate and who violate the civil rights of others," said U.S. Attorney Paul Charlton.

On August 14, 2003, Carroll pled guilty to an indictment charging him with violating 42 U.S.C. § 3631, which carries a maximum penalty of ten years and a \$250,000 fine.

The complaint specifically alleged that in April 1999, Carroll constructed a wooden cross and set it on fire in the yard of an African-American woman. The defendant admitted that the government could prove beyond a reasonable doubt that he did the aforementioned acts because the victim was black and because she was occupying a dwelling in Cottonwood, Arizona.

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"Threatening others based upon race or ethnicity undermines the foundation upon which our country is built," said R. Alexander Acosta, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division. "This sentencing is a reminder that the Justice Department will pursue and prosecute anyone who commits these types of crimes."

The Federal Bureau of Investigation and Cottonwood Police Department investigated this matter. Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Arizona Ronald R. Gallegos and Justice Department trial attorney Adriana Vieco jointly prosecuted this case.

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